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Qualities for an Executive

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Many years ago I had occasion to call upon the official of one of our large railway systems. As we sat in his office discussing the matter under consideration, a young man appeared and very respectfully stood at attention. Up to this time the actions of the executive had been most courteous and there was not the least indication of a turbulent sea lying underneath the calm exterior. At the sight of this subordinate, however, and with the completion of his sentence, the storm broke. His large fist came down upon the desk with sufficient force to rattle his unanswered letters, and in a thundering voice he belowered, "This thing has gone on long enough, you go back and tell Jim I'll not stand for it another minute." After further words far more emphatic, the young man turned and left.

The expression on the face of the orderly had been a study. He was a stranger to me, but his general appearance, his attitude and manner of receiving such words from his superior indicated intelligence and a knowledge of proper ethics under such circumstances. The blush that spread over that face was for the man who had exercised his authority in a manner made possible only by his superior position. We will not assume that "Jim" was given the message in the manner it rolled forth at its source. It was probably given in a firm but courteous manner with the remark that the "old man" was quite "warm" about it. Jim took up his work, no doubt, along other lines, with little thought of the superior's action, but the young man, who had served as the buffer, carried within himself thoughts which bred discontented effort and therefore inefficiency. Self respect and a strong desire to render the fullest service led the young man to consider other opportunities. The railway company lost a promising engineer all on account of a lack of consideration on the part of an executive.

There is another type of executives, probably small of stature, but most courteous in manner and most appreciative of the work performed, who takes the position that "the king can do no wrong." He thoroughly believes in horizontal stratification in an organization with good insulating material between strata. The only means of communication between divisions is through his immediate subordinates. Should an executive of one of the lower strata register a protest as to some action taken relative to that division, an action which he knows will be detrimental, he is politely informed in a firm and dignified manner that he is criticizing his superior.

The executive is not a superhuman,—he has his likes and dislikes and also his peculiarities as well as other members of the human race. He may be one, who, suffering under censure from a superior, passes it on to one of his subordinates. He may be one, who fearful for the security of his position thinks that, by "firing" his department head and all others having capabilities and knowledge equal to his own, he makes his own place more secure.

He may be one who believes his most effective

weapon for co-operative endeavor is sarcasm. He may be one who is naturally suspicious of most all subordinates, has confidence in few and selects men for responsible places in his organization who will serve as watch dogs, forming no friendships and therefore exposing as is believed, the mistakes of each.

The ideal executive, the type which, as far as possible, the engineering graduate should select as his superior and should aim to become is:

- (1) One who works with his organization. That is, his organization, even down to the office boy, does not work for him but with him.
- (2) One who is not suspicious and inclined to be jealous of his own subordinates.
- (3) One who is willing to delegate responsibilities to subordinates and to relinquish details.
- (4) One who will be broadminded and progressive, not blocking departure from the old ways when it is demonstrated that such procedure may be best.
- (5) One who puts problems before his men for consideration and advice, and gives due credit for valuable suggestions.
- (6) One who will not hesitate to criticize subordinates in a gentlemanly way and when results are not obtained, to state the reasons.
- (7) One who will never criticize or "call down" the head of a department in public or in the presence of other employees.
- (8) One who will never go over the head of a subordinate, and give orders direct to the employees in that subordinate's department.
- (9) One who is not so influenced by excessive gains that he will turn his plant into an institution of industrial slavery, and keep for months and years, employees upon one simple operation.
- (10) One who will assign to each employee that kind of work for which each is best fitted, and which will give to each man the greatest satisfaction and contentment.

If the college graduate would render the greatest possible efficiency—that efficiency which can be obtained only by contentment and satisfaction in one's work—he must not only avoid as far as possible the inefficient types of executives, but must also guard himself carefully so that no undesirable quality fastens itself upon him when he undertakes a position of responsibility.

THE ETIQUETTE OF THE ROAD

Even if it is a good deal of trouble, motorists usually can avoid some additional trouble by stopping as soon as possible after hitting a pedestrian. And, besides, ordinary manners demand that he stop; the pedestrian nearly always does.—*Kansas City Star*.